

## Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03 H-02

PA-03 PRS-01 USIE-00 INR-10 INRE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00

CCO-00 NSCE-00 ACDA-19 GAC-01 MBFR-03 SCI-06 NSF-04

NASA-04 RSR-01 /107 W

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O R 041030 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0686

INFO DOD

CIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 1951

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MAR, PINR, AS

SUBJ: BULLETIN ARTICLE ON US BASES

REF: CANBERRA 01950

1. TEXT OF PETER SAMUEL' S ARTICLE ON US BASES FROM NEWS MAGAZINE BULLETIN TRANSMITTED REFTEL. DFA FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKENEY, AFTER INTERNAL MEETINGS HERE AND ON HIGHER LEVEL INSTRUCTIONS, CALLED DCM LATE AFTERNOON APRIL 4. HE SPOKE WITH GREAT EARNESTNESS AND INTENSITY AND SAID HE WISHED TO BE IN A POSITION TO ASSURE HIS SUPERIORS THAT WHAT HE HAD TO SAY WOULD BE BROUGHT IMMEDIATELY TO ATTENTION OF AUTHORITATIVE LEVELS OF ALL US GOVERNMENT AGENCIES CONCERNED AT ONCE. GOA WANTED USG COMMENTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. BLAKENEY SAID GOA WISHED TO KNOW WHAT SAMUEL HAD BEEN TOLD IN WASHINGTON ( ARTICLE IS REplete WITH REFERENCES TO DEFENSE OFFICIALS AS SOURCE) . HE WISHED TO IMPART THAT IF THE REPORT IS ACCURATE AND IF IT REFLECTS ATTITUDES OF USG, THE GOA VIEWS THIS AS QUITE IMPROPER AND POLITICALLY MOST UNWISE. SECONDLY, IT  
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APPEARED THAT US OFFICIALS WERE FREELY DISCUSSING PRIVATE DEALINGS WITH GOA AND PUTTING GOA IN A POSITION OF APPEARING TO WITHHOLD INFORMATION FROM AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC WHICH THE US WAS WILLING TO RELEASE.

IN FACT, HE SAID, INFORMATION NOT RELEASED HERE WAS PURELY " PRESENTATIONAL, NOT SUBSTANTIVE." HIS THIRD POINT WAS THAT IF SAMUEL WAS ACCURATE, US OFFICIALS HAD TAKEN IT ON THEMSELVES TO TELL GOA HOW IT SHOULD HANDLE POLITICAL PRESENTATION TO ITS OWN PARLIAMENT AND PEOPLE ON MOST DELICATE ISSUE. THIS WOULD INDICATE " A REGRETTABLE CONTINUING IGNORANCE AND INSENSITIVITY TO THE ACTUAL POLITICAL SITUATION HERE" AND THE VERY HIGH POLITICAL COSTS THE PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER WERE HAVING TO PAY ON BASES ISSUE. APPARENT CLUMSINESS WAS SERIOUSLY PREJUDICIAL TO IMPORTANT INTERESTS OF GOA AND USG, HE SAID.

3. BLAKENEY WENT BACK OVER THE GROUND AGAIN SAYING GOA WANTED TO " MAKE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT TO ALL RELEVANT PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON THAT GOA WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HAD BEEN TOLD OR INTIMATED TO SAMUEL AND IF HIS REPORT REFLECTS WHAT WAS SAID OR IMPLIED THAT GOA REGARDS IT AS THOROUGHLY IMPROPER AND OBJECTIONABLE." HE RECAPITULATED THAT US OFFICIALS WERE APPARENTLY DISCUSSING WITH PRESS PRIVATE AND SENSITIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH GOA. US POSITION AS REPORTED REFLECTED A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER WERE TRYING TO DO AND DIFFICULTIES THEY FACED IN PROTECTING US INSTALLATIONS AND THEIR SECRECY HERE. HE SAID ARTICLE PUT GOVERNMENT IN FALSE POSITION OF APPEARING TO WITHHOLD INFORMATION FROM ITS PUBLIC WHICH USG WAS WILLING TO REVEAL, AND FINALLY THAT WE SEEMED TO BE UNDERTAKING TO TELL GOA HOW TO DEAL WITH ITS PUBLIC AND ITS POLITICS. HE HOPED WASHINGTON WOULD FULLY REALIZE THE EMBARRASSMENT CAUSED BY WHAT HAD EVIDENTLY BEEN SAID TO SAMUEL.

4. BLAKENEY WENT BACK THROUGH TEXT OF ARTICLE UNDERSCORING EVERY ALLUSION TO US OFFICIALS OR INFORMATION GIVEN BY DEFENSE INFORMANTS. HE SEEMED PARTICULARLY NETTLED BY STATEMENTS THAT WE HAD REVEALED BARNARD'S STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT FEBRUARY 28 WAS ABBREVIATED  
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VERSION OF AGREED DRAFT, THAT " AMERICANS ARE GREATLY

PUZZLED AS TO WHY NEW GOVERNMENT HAS NOT GIVEN AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE AS MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT BASES AS IT WAS TOLD IT COULD," AND THAT IT WAS REVEALED " THAT IN JANUARY ( SIC) US DEFENSE DEPARTMENT PROPOSED TO SEND A TEAM OF TOP DEFENSE SCIENCE OFFICIALS TO CANBERRA FOR EXHAUSTIVE BRIEFINGS AND THIS WAS REFUSED."

5. COMMENT: ALL OR NEARLY ALL POINTS WHICH SAMUEL MADE HAVE BEEN REPORTED OR RUMORED PUBLICLY HERETOFORE. IT SEEMS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT HE ATTRIBUTED TO US OFFICIALS FAR MORE THAN THEY SAID. NEVERTHELESS, BLAKENEY IS NOT UNDERSTATING PROBLEM CREATED HERE BY ARTICLE. AN URGENT RESPONSE TO GOA IS CALLED FOR AND IT IS HARD TO GUESS WHAT THEY EXPECT. MINIMUM WOULD BE THAT USG CAN DENY OR AT LEAST DEPLORE THAT SAMUEL' S SOURCES ARE US AND THAT HIGH USG LEVELS WILL REPUDIATE ANY IMPLICATION THAT USG IS DISSATISFIED WITH WAY GOA HAS HANDLED BASE QUESTION OR VENTURES TO TELL THEM HOW TO RUN THEIR GOVERNMENT.

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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